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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/803,667	03/12/2001	David S. Miller	31921-169499	9714
26694	7590	09/22/2006	EXAMINER	
VENABLE LLP			MEINECKE DIAZ, SUSANNA M	
P.O. BOX 34385			ART UNIT	
WASHINGTON, DC 20043-9998			PAPER NUMBER	
			3623	

DATE MAILED: 09/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/803,667	Applicant(s) MILLER, DAVID S.	
	Examiner Susanna M. Diaz	Art Unit 3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 11, 13 and 35-50 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 11, 13 and 35-50 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 29, 2006 has been entered.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 11, 13, and 35-37 have been amended.

Claims 38-50 have been added.

Claims 9, 10, and 15-34 have been cancelled.

Claims 1-7, 11, 13, and 35-50 are presented for examination.

2. The previously pending claim objection is withdrawn in response to the cancellation of claim 10.

The previously pending rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph is withdrawn in response to the cancellation of claim 9.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed June 29, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Baker does not address the newly amended limitation “wherein said electronic tax return and/or tax data is electronically provided to said electronic intermediary by a tax data provider” because Baker’s tax information is provided to a central location (e.g., a service bureau) by “individual accounting and tax preparation firms” (pages 10-11 of Applicant’s response). Applicant defines “tax data providers” as follows:

...The term “tax data provider” refers to each party that has tax information relevant to the taxpayer’s tax liability or tax reporting obligations. Non-limiting examples of tax data providers include the taxpayer’s employers 22, partnerships, banks 23, savings and loans institutions, mortgage institutions, credit card bureaus, thrift institutions, security brokerage firms 24, mutual fund holding institutions, charities 25, and federal, state, local, and foreign taxing authorities 27. (Pages 9-10 of Applicant’s specification)

By Applicant’s own definition, Baker’s “individual accounting and tax preparation firms” are examples of parties that have “tax information relevant to the taxpayer’s tax liability or tax reporting obligations.” For example, tax preparation firms prepare a taxpayer’s tax returns, which include a summary of the taxpayer’s tax liability and tax reporting obligations. Additionally, it should be noted that the non-limiting examples of tax data providers described in the specification are “non-limiting” and therefore do not serve to limit the term “tax data provider” to a special definition. The only special definition of “tax data provider” established by Applicant in the specification is the statement, “The term “tax data provider” refers to each party that has tax information relevant to the taxpayer’s tax liability or tax reporting obligations.” (Page 9 of Applicant’s specification) Furthermore, only dependent claims 6, 38, 40, 43, 46, and 49 limit the tax

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data provider to being “an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority,” thereby implying that the scope of the “tax data provider” recited in the respectively independent claims (i.e., claims 1, 11, 13, 42, 45, and 48) is broader than that recited in these dependent claims.

Applicant submits that the instant application provides the benefit of increased quality and accuracy of the tax data. “Thus, because the tax information is not originally prepared and/or submitted by the taxpayer but is, instead, prepared and/or submitted by third party tax data providers with independent reasons for assuring the veracity of the tax information, such tax information is inherently more reliable” (page 11 of Applicant’s response). While Applicant’s statements may be true, the claimed invention does not recite any structural or functional elements that preclude the tax data from being derived from the taxpayer. As a matter of fact, all tax data related to a particular taxpayer is in one way or another “derived” from a taxpayer in the sense that the data is specific to information related to that taxpayer. Additionally, the recited structure and functionality are not affected by who or what performs each step of the claimed invention. For example, there are no structural elements that verify the identity of a user. As far as the scope of the invention is concerned, whether a taxpayer, a tax preparer, an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority provides the recited tax

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data, the recited steps are performed the same. Similarly, the same structural elements are used regardless of the specific user of the invention. In other words, the claim limitations do not confine the scope of the invention to patentably distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art. Also, a human user cannot be recited as a system element; therefore, the type of user using a system does not patentably distinguish the invention, especially the system/apparatus claims, over the prior art. Instead, some structural or functional elements that provide significance to which users are able to provide data would likely offer more than mere, non-functional descriptive material. For example, an apparatus that allows a user to perform certain customized functionality based on whether or not he/she is a taxpayer versus an employer would impart some significance to the type of user recited (although the scope of the claims would be narrowed, thereby requiring additional search and/or consideration). Any such amendment must also be supported by Applicant's originally filed disclosure.

Applicant also argues that a type of user is not equivalent to non-functional descriptive data (pages 12-13 of Applicant's response). However, the Examiner submits that the same analysis is relevant in both situations. Since the type of user providing data does not affect the recited structure or functionality, the type of user serves as a mere label for a user. This label is non-functional descriptive material. Additionally, at best, the type of user submitting tax data implies a type of tax data that the specific user type typically has access to. However, these specific examples of tax data are not utilized to perform calculations that require such specific examples of tax data. Even though a "check" is performed based on the gathered data in the claimed

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invention, the type of check and required analysis thereof are not specified so it is not clear which types of data are relevant to such a check. This serves as further evidence that the recited types of users (that, at best, imply the provision of certain types of tax data) are subjected to the same analysis addressed in MPEP § 2106), particularly regarding the evaluation of non-functional, descriptive material.

Additionally (aside from the nonfunctional descriptive material analysis), the type of tax data provider does not affect the structure or functionality of the claimed invention. Since the specification of a certain type of tax data provider adds nothing to the structure or functionality of the claimed invention, the type of tax data provider does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. Even further, claim 6 recites, as one alternative, that "said tax data provider is an employer." There is no requirement that this employer be the employer of the recited taxpayer necessarily; "an employer" (e.g., of anyone) can provide the tax data within the scope of the claim. As admitted by Applicant on pages 10-11 of Applicant's response filed June 29, 2006, Baker's tax information is provided to a central location (e.g., a service bureau) by "individual accounting and tax preparation firms." Baker's individual accounting and tax preparation firms are understood to have employees since they provide accounting and tax preparation services (col. 8, lines 37-52). In other words, Baker's individual accounting and tax preparation firms are "employers" and they provide tax data; therefore, Baker discloses that "said tax data provider is an employer," as recited in claim 6.

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Applicant argues that Baker does not teach a taxing authority, as defined by Applicant's specification (pages 13-14 of Applicant's response); however, as stated in the art rejection of claim 6, Baker's tax data provider is an accounting or tax preparation firm (abstract; col. 8, lines 37-52). Depending on one's interpretation, an accounting or tax preparation firm may or may not be construed as a "taxing authority." Irrespective of the interpretation of a "taxing authority," the Examiner submits that the specific recited examples of a tax data provider amount to merely non-functional, descriptive material. As discussed above, the "taxing authority" still does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art because it does not affect the recited structure or functionality. The "taxing authority" was also rejected as part of a § 103 analysis. Applicant has not addressed this § 103 analysis in its entirety. Finally, the "taxing authority" was only recited as one of the alternative types of tax data providers in claims 6, 38, 40, 43, 46, and 49. Applicant has not addressed why each of the recited alternative types of tax data providers is allegedly not addressed by the art rejection.

Regarding the use of Official Notice, Applicant argues, "Even if it is considered well-known to utilize tax data received from one of these parties to complete one's own tax returns, the Applicant respectfully submits that it is not well-known in the art for a 'tax data provider' (as defined in the instant application) to **electronically provide** an electronic tax return and/or tax data to a tax information requestor via an electronic intermediary or, alternatively, directly to a tax information requestor. The Official Notice fails to address this recitation." (Pages 14-15 of Applicant's response) The Examiner took Official Notice "that it was old and well-known in the art of tax preparation to utilize

tax data received from an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority to complete one's tax paperwork (e.g., tax returns)."

Applicant's argument addresses the claim language *per se* and fails to address the rejection of the claims over Baker (U.S. Patent No. 6,473,741) effectively in view of Official Notice (which is treated as a reference). In response to Applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). Applicant has failed to address the § 103 rejection of the claims as a whole; therefore, Applicant's argument is not persuasive.

Applicant broadly states that "the step of electronically providing an electronic tax return and/or tax data to said electronic intermediary **by at least one of the recited tax data providers** is not capable of instant and unquestionable demonstration as being well-known." (Page 15 of Applicant's response) The Examiner did not take Official Notice that "the step of electronically providing an electronic tax return and/or tax data to said electronic intermediary by at least one of the recited tax data providers" is old and well-known in the art; therefore, Applicant's argument is not understood. Again, Applicant has failed to address the § 103 rejection of the claims as a whole; therefore, Applicant's argument is not persuasive.

Also, Examiner notes that, as per MPEP § 2144.03(C), the statements of Official Notice made in the art rejection have been established as admitted prior art since Applicant has not persuasively traversed the Examiner's assertions of Official Notice. More specifically, the following statements of Official Notice are now formally established on record as admitted prior art:

(1) Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use a modem to facilitate Internet communications and a modem is commonly used as a type of telephone communication equipment.

(2) Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of tax preparation to utilize tax data received from an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority to complete one's tax paperwork (e.g., tax returns).

Regarding the rejection of claim 6, Applicant argues that "Baker teaches away from the modification proposed by the Office. If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious." (Page 15 of Applicant's response) As explained in the art rejection and in the response to arguments above, the type of tax data provider does not affect the structure or functionality of the claimed invention; therefore, not only does it fail to patentably distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art, but

Baker's principle of operation would not be affected since its existing structure and functionality can clearly perform at least the basic functions of the claimed invention.

In conclusion, Applicant's arguments are not persuasive.

The claimed invention includes subject matter not found in the parent applications (although supported by the original disclosure of the instant Continuation-in-Part application); therefore, for purposes of applying prior art, the claims are granted a priority date of March 12, 2001 (the filing date of the instant application).

Also, depending on the interpretation of claims 6, 38, 40, 43, 46, and 49, these claims may be rejected either under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or 35 U.S.C. § 103. Both analyses are presented below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 11, 13, and 35-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Baker (U.S. Patent No. 6,473,741).

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Baker discloses a method for collecting tax information by a tax information requestor comprising the steps of:

[Claim 1] connecting electronically said tax information requestor to an electronic intermediary, wherein said electronic tax return and/or tax data is electronically provided to said electronic intermediary by a tax data provider (col. 10, lines 59-67; col. 11, lines 15-20);

collecting electronically at least one of an electronic tax return or tax data of a taxpayer from said electronic intermediary (col. 11, lines 3-20); and

performing a check of said taxpayer by said tax information requestor using said electronic tax return or tax data collected electronically (col. 8, lines 27-29; col. 9, lines 14-15; col. 11, lines 15-20),

wherein said check is not used to compute taxes of said taxpayer, wherein said tax information requestor is not a taxing authority, and wherein said electronic intermediary stores said electronic tax return or tax data (col. 8, lines 27-29; col. 9, lines 14-15; col. 11, lines 15-20);

[Claim 2] wherein said tax information requestor is electronically connected to said electronic intermediary using an electronic link (col. 10, lines 59-67; col. 11, lines 15-20);

[Claim 4] wherein said electronic link comprises an electronic data network (col. 10, lines 59-67; col. 11, lines 15-20);

[Claim 5] wherein said electronic data network is the Internet (col. 10, lines 59-67; col. 11, lines 15-20);

[Claim 7] wherein said tax data is a payroll statement, a bank statement, a savings and loan statement, a mortgage statement, a credit card bureau statement, a thrift institution statement, a brokerage account statement, a mutual fund statement, a charity statement, or a statement relevant for tax purposes (col. 8, lines 37-52);

[Claim 35] connecting electronically said tax information requestor to a tax data provider (col. 10, lines 59-67; col. 11, lines 3-20); and

collecting electronically tax data from said tax data provider (col. 10, lines 59-67; col. 11, lines 3-20).

[Claim 6] Regarding claim 6, the type of tax data provider does not affect the structure or functionality of the claimed invention. Since the specification of a certain type of tax data provider adds nothing to the structure or functionality of the claimed invention, the type of tax data provider does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. Even further, claim 6 recites, as one alternative, that "said tax data provider is an employer." There is no requirement that this employer be the employer of the recited taxpayer necessarily; "an employer" (e.g., of anyone) can provide the tax data within the scope of the claim. As admitted by Applicant on pages 10-11 of Applicant's response filed June 29, 2006, Baker's tax information is provided to a central location (e.g., a service bureau) by "individual accounting and tax preparation firms." Baker's individual accounting and tax preparation firms are understood to have employees since they provide accounting and tax preparation services (col. 8, lines 37-52). In other words, Baker's individual accounting and tax preparation firms are

“employers” and they provide tax data; therefore, Baker discloses that “said tax data provider is an employer,” as recited in claim 6.

[Claims 11, 13, 36-50] Claims 11, 13, and 36-50 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims 1, 6, 7, and 35 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

Regarding claims 39-50, it should be noted that the “tax information requestor” and “tax data provider” are recited so broadly that the requestor and provider could be interpreted as Baker’s third party requestor and “individual accounting and tax preparation firms” or central location (e.g., service bureau), respectively. These claims do not specify how direct the connection between the “tax information requestor” and “tax data provider” is; therefore, the two parties could be connected directly or through an intermediary. Furthermore, the terms “tax information requestor” and “tax data provider” are relative. For example, during the time that Baker’s “individual accounting and tax preparation firms” are supplying the tax data to the central location (e.g., service bureau), the central location (e.g., service bureau) effectively serves as a “tax information requestor” while the “individual accounting and tax preparation firms” are tax data providers. When Baker is making this tax data available to third party requestors, then the third party requestors can also be viewed as “tax information requestors” while both the “individual accounting and tax preparation firms” and the central location (e.g., a service bureau) can be interpreted as “tax data providers.”

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 3, 6, 38, 40, 43, 46, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baker (U.S. Patent No. 6,473,741), as applied to claims 2, 11, 13, 35, 42, 45, and 48 above.

As per claim 3, Baker discloses that tax information is preferably transmitted via the Internet (col. 10, lines 59-63; col. 11, lines 15-20), yet there is no explicit teaching of Baker actually using telephone communication equipment, such as a modem, to perform its electronic data transmissions. However, Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use a modem to facilitate Internet communications and a modem is commonly used as a type of telephone communication equipment. The modem technology is a widespread form of communication due, at least in part, to its affordable nature for the average computer owner. Therefore, since Baker discloses that tax information is preferably transmitted via the Internet, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to perform such transmissions via telephone communication equipment, such as a modem, in order to enable the average individual computer owner to affordably conduct such communication.

Regarding claim 6, Baker's tax data provider is an accounting or tax preparation firm (abstract; col. 8, lines 37-52). Depending on one's interpretation, an accounting or tax preparation firm may or may not be construed as a "taxing authority." Irrespective of the interpretation of a "taxing authority," the Examiner submits that the specific recited examples of a tax data provider amount to merely non-functional, descriptive material. These differences are only found in the non-functional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor do they alter the recited structural elements and therefore do not provide a patentable distinction over the prior art. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific data. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP § 2106. Furthermore, Baker's invention relies of the receipt of tax data from an accounting or tax preparation firm (i.e., a tax data source) to store and sell warehoused data. Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of tax preparation to utilize tax data received from an employer, a partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority to complete one's tax paperwork (e.g., tax returns). Therefore, the Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to modify Baker to receive tax data from an employer, a

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partnership, a bank, a savings and loan institution, a mortgage institution, a credit card bureau, a thrift institution, a securities brokerage firm, a mutual fund holding institution, a charity, the Internal Revenue Service, or a taxing authority in order to expand the type of details made available through the data warehouse, thereby increasing the potential of interest in and marketability of the type of data stored in the data warehouse.

Additionally (aside from the nonfunctional descriptive material analysis), the type of tax data provider does not affect the structure or functionality of the claimed invention. Since the specification of a certain type of tax data provider adds nothing to the structure or functionality of the claimed invention, the type of tax data provider does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. Even further, claim 6 recites, as one alternative, that "said tax data provider is an employer." There is no requirement that this employer be the employer of the recited taxpayer necessarily; "an employer" (e.g., of anyone) can provide the tax data within the scope of the claim. As admitted by Applicant on pages 10-11 of Applicant's response filed June 29, 2006, Baker's tax information is provided to a central location (e.g., a service bureau) by "individual accounting and tax preparation firms." Baker's individual accounting and tax preparation firms are understood to have employees since they provide accounting and tax preparation services (col. 8, lines 37-52). In other words, Baker's individual accounting and tax preparation firms are "employers" and they provide tax data; therefore, Baker discloses that "said tax data provider is an employer," as recited in claim 6.

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Claims 38, 40, 43, 46, and 49 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 6 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (571) 272-6733. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Susanna M. Diaz
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3623

September 7, 2006